

Colorado City-Specific Strategies

focus on achievement

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Colorado Charter Schools

- 170 charter schools in Colorado educate approximately 72,000 students - representing just under 9% of Colorado's students.
- The charter population is increasingly representative of Colorado's overall population - *42.8% of Colorado charter school students are minorities compared to 44.5% system wide.*
- *Charters operate in every type of Colorado community from urban and suburban population centers to rural and small town communities.*



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Colorado Charter Schools

- Colorado charter schools are primarily authorized by local school districts – nearly 50 different authorizers with as many as 30 schools and over a dozen with only 1 or 2 schools.
- The demand for charter options continues. At last count, over 40,000 students were estimated to be on waitlists in Colorado.



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Charter School Performance

- A higher percentage of Colorado's public charter elementary and middle schools exceeded the state's growth rates in math, reading and writing, when compared to traditional public elementary and middle schools.
- A higher percentage of Colorado's public charter high schools exceeded the state's growth rates in reading and writing when compared to Colorado's traditional public high schools.



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Colorado League of Charter Schools

- The Colorado League of Charter Schools is a non-profit, membership organization supporting the 170 charter schools in the state.
- The League is committed to improving Colorado's public education system through the growth and expansion of high-quality options for students while also promoting policy changes to strengthen Colorado's public school system.



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Recent League Initiatives

- School Services
 - BCSQ Colorado (Building Charter School Quality) promoting and supporting whole-school commitment to effective use of data and performance management systems.
 - New School Development efforts improving the strength of new charters through quality standards for charter applicants and authorizers.
 - Developing and launching collaboratives – multi-school collaborations providing improved service options e.g. food service, health insurance, and special education.



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Recent League Initiatives

- Public Affairs
 - Facilities efforts resulting in increased funding for charter school facilities from both state and local sources.
 - School quality efforts focused on our state's overall accountability system and charter specific efforts to integrate nationally recognized industry standards for charter schools and authorizers into our systems.
 - Efforts to increase autonomy and viability through expanded charter options for food services and special education as well as increased opportunities to access competitive state and federal grants.



Denver Public Schools – Gates Compact

- As of fall 2010 the League has been working with Denver Public Schools, Get Smart Schools and the city's charter community on compact development.
- The resulting compact signed by 100% of Denver's charter schools.
- Key elements featuring fiscal equity, special education, equity in enrollment and access, and school performance frameworks and supporting data/ information systems.



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League Role in City Efforts – Relationships and Resources

- Relationships: To a significant extent, a city-wide strategy depends on collective action among the city's charter community:
 - 100% of Denver charters are part of the League and 100% signed the compact.
 - The work anticipated under the compact is precisely the type of thing we do as an advocacy organization. Analysis, consensus building, communications and translation into workable, implementable policy.



League Role in City Efforts – Relationships and Resources

- As a statewide organization the League can leverage resources effectively to support city strategies.
 - One of the League's compact priorities involves performance management, data systems, and performance measures – as a statewide organization the League is able to support a 5 person team with substantial expertise to support “best in class” systems and implementation in Denver.
 - Special education collaborative: Douglas County
 - Facilities advocacy: state grant funding



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League Role in City Efforts – Relationships and Resources

- Resources – what we learn and develop in Denver shapes efforts across our state.
 - Authorizer quality: School Performance Framework and quality authorizing decisions
 - Facilities advocacy:
 - Bond elections history in Denver has allowed us to advocate effectively across the state
 - Space sharing



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